

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action

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Info

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Control: 4863

Rec'd: OCTOBER 7, 1963

9:17 AM

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FROM: SAIGON

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 652, OCTOBER 7, 8 PM

EYES ONLY

cjt#3 det
4/8/64

IMMEDIATE

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FOR SECRETARY RUSK PASS TO MCNAMARA

1. HEREWITH FURTHER THOUGHTS ON YOUR 534.

2. LANGUAGE IN PARAGRAPHS 17 AND 19-H ON "RESTRICTION ON ROLE OF NHUS" SEEMS UNREALISTIC FOR THESE REASONS:

A. ON BASIS OF MY PRESENT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS CLEAR THAT U.S. HAS PROVIDED THE WEAPONS, TRAINING AND MONEY TO ENABLE NHU TO HAVE IN EFFECT ADEQUATE ARMY OF HIS OWN, CONSISTING OF MEN WHO ARE CAREFULLY SELECTED, INTENSELY INDOCTRINAL AND WELL PAID. FOR ITS SIZE, IT IS A FORMIDABLE FORCE AND MAN FOR MAN APPEARS TO HAVE A BIG EDGE OVER AN ORDINARY MILITARY OUTFIT. FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON, WE APPEAR TO HAVE DONE ALL THIS WITHOUT OUR HAVING AN EFFECTIVE STRINGS WHATEVER ON THE USE OF THIS FORCE. OUR ONLY POSSIBLE LEVERAGE WOULD BE CUTTING OFF FUNDS, BUT IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS WOULD BE EFFECTIVE.

B. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ITALIAN JOURNALIST GAMBINO FOR THE ITALIAN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY ESPRESSO, WHICH IS TO BE PUBLISHED IN ITALY ON THURSDAY (COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION BEING POUCHED), NHU SAYS IN EFFECT THAT HE CAN AND WOULD LIKE TO GET ALONG WITHOUT THE AMERICANS. HE ONLY WANTS SOME HELICOPTER UNITS AND SOME MONEY. BUT HE DEFINITELY DOES NOT WANT AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO, HE SAYS, ARE ABSOLUTELY INCAPABLE OF FIGHTING A GUERRILLA WAR. EVEN THE SPECIAL

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FORCES CREATED BY KENNEDY ARE NOT WORTH ANYTHING. HE WANTS VIET-NAM TO BE TREATED AS U.S. TREATS YUGOSLAVIA -- GIVING THEM MONEY BUT NOT SEEKING TO INFLUENCE THEIR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. HE SAYS THAT HE AND THE PRESIDENT WERE AGAINST MASSIVE AMERICAN INTERVENTION EVEN AT "THE TIME OF GREATEST DANGER, THAT IS, THE WINTER OF 1961-1962". THE WAR CANNOT BE WON WITH THE AMERICANS BECAUSE THEY ARE AN OBSTACLE TO THE REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY WHICH IS THE PREREQUISITE OF VICTORY. THEN COME THESE WORDS: "IF THE AMERICANS WERE TO INTERRUPT THEIR HELP, IT MAY NOT BE A BAD THING AFTER ALL." HE SAID THAT IF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, FORMER AMBASSADOR CHUONG, WERE TO "COME TO SAIGON, I WILL HAVE HIS HEAD CUT OFF. I WILL HANG HIM IN THE CENTER OF A SQUARE AND LET HIM DANGLE THERE. MY WIFE WILL MAKE THE KNOT ON THE ROPE BECAUSE SHE IS PROUD OF BEING A VIETNAMESE AND SHE IS A GOOD PATRIOT".

C. WITHIN THE LAST FEW DAYS THE MINISTER OF CIVIC ACTION HIEU SAID TO ONE OF MY (VERY FEW, ALAS!) HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCES: "WE DON'T NEED THE AMERICANS ANY MORE EVEN IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, AS WE CAN CONFRONT OUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITH OUR OWN RESOURCES." PRESENT SUSPENSION OF COMMODITY IMPORT PROGRAM MAY GIVE GVN A CHANCE TO DECIDE WHETHER HIEU IS RIGHT.

D. DIEM IN HIS MESSAGE TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TODAY, SPEAKING OF THE FORTHCOMING VICTORY OVER THE VIET CONG, SAYS THAT IT WILL "SHOW THE SMALL COUNTRIES OF THE NON-ALIGNED WORLD (TIERS MONDE) THAT THEY TOO CAN STRANGLE COMMUNIST SUBVERSIVE WAR". HE ALSO SINGLED OUT THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION (SCENE OF MADAME NHU'S ACTIVITY) AS THE PLACE WHERE VIET-NAM, ON THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD, HAS PLAYED A NOTABLE ROLE.

3. THE ABOVE LEADS ME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT WE CANNOT REMOVE THE NHU'S BY NON-VIOLENT MEANS AGAINST THEIR WILL.

4. I ALSO CONCLUDE THAT WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT DIEM AND NHU

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HAVE THE SAME AIMS AS WE. CLEARLY NHU WANTS OUR HELP WITHOUT OUR PRESENCE WHICH, IN HIS VIEW, WE USE AS AN EXCUSE FOR INTERFERING IN THEIR INTERNAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. GET US OUT, HE ARGUES, AND HE CAN BE AS FREE TO DO AS HE WANTS AS TITO IS NOW. AND NHU IS A STRONG INFLUENCE ON DIEM.

5. PARAGRAPHS 3 AND 4 MAKE IT HARD TO SEE TODAY A GOOD FUTURE FOR THE U.S.-GVN RELATIONSHIP. I SAY THIS BECAUSE THE ONLY THING WHICH THE U.S. REALLY WANTS -- THE REMOVAL OF OR RESTRICTION ON THE NHUS -- IS OUT OF THE QUESTION. YET, NONE OF THE POINTS 19 A-1 LOOK REALLY IMPORTANT.

6. I BELIEVE DIEM AND NHU SEE U.S. PRESSING FOR THINGS SUCH AS REMOVAL OF NHUS, RELEASE OF STUDENTS WHICH THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY SURE THEY CANNOT GIVE AND THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER A REQUEST TO WITHDRAW AS A GROWING POSSIBILITY. THE BEGINNING OF WITHDRAWAL MIGHT TRIGGER OFF A COUP.

GP-2.

K LODGE

BAP

NOTE: PASSED DEFENSE EXCLUSIVE FOR MCNAMARA 10/7/63 10:55 AM

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY DELIVERED S/S-O AT 10:25 AM OCTOBER 7TH

NOTE: PASSED WHITE HOUSE 10/7/63 10:50 AM